

AUSS ISSUE #3, VOL #1  
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# **DANSTEAD TRAVELLER**

*IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE*

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**THE BEST EATS IN ARDOTH**

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*JORUNE'S WILD KINGDOM REVEALED*

*SHOLARI NOTES:*  
***NEW CREATURES OF DELSHA***

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## REVENGE! WINSTON RETURNS TO DELSHA

BY: WINSTON HUMBERT III  
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*T*his month I am journeying to Delsha, the place that turns boys into men; where every kill is a trophy, every day is a challenge, every adventurer returning home is lauded as a hero. Deepest, darkest Delsha is where all good hunters should aspire to go, should their means and their calendar afford it.

Of course, Delsha is not for everyone. We have all heard the stories of the brave smiling souls that set sail from Tan Sor never to be heard from again. And though we hang our heads in sadness at the loss to their families, as all people of good breeding should, I cannot help but think they did not know what they were getting into.

I have made yearly trips to Delsha for the last two decades, and it is my hope by writing this article along the way, you will come to have a better understanding of the challenges that face the Delshan traveler, and how to overcome them. It took a considerable amount of persuasion on behalf of my publisher to even print such an article, but as they so astutely pointed out, after 20 trips there, I should consider myself *the* authority on Delsha. In that spirit, I will attempt to give you and your expedition every advantage on your travels.

### HOW TO GET THERE

Anyone that can read the navigational charts and do the math must know that going to Delsha yearly by traditional means is nigh on impossible. Delsha lies 6800 miles southwest by sea from Ardoth and 3400 miles from Tan Iricid. Even for someone as wealthy as I, ocean

travel would quickly drain my resources without a considerable income in the interim. I will not discourage your traveling by traditional means for one or two trips, but if you plan on returning as I do, another route must be found. Both routes will be outlined here for your comparison and perusal.

### Why Traditional Means Fail:

As most of my regular readers already know, I am not a light packer. I am used to escorting Kesht, Keshtia, heads of state, Drenn and better-bred men and women through some of the most perilous terrain on Jorune. I often travel with as many as twenty footmen and several beasts of burden, either thombo or bochigon. It is my wish that they (and I!) be as comfortable as possible while in the wilds, enjoying all the little luxuries along the way. Some of my readers and potential clients have expressed concern over the sheer amount of goods I take into the wilds, and the cost of providing them to my clients. To counter these nay-sayers, I will point to the survival rate of my clients – it is without doubt one of the highest among escort services anywhere on Jorune. (Although we do have a curious tendency for the staff to expire.)

In packing for Delsha, those nay-sayers would find themselves in dire straits. If you don't pack it, you will have to do without. Period. This goes for everything from food to fuel oil to pots to boil your drinking water and Thriddle sanitary paper for those private moments. The nearest friendly port is seven weeks away by ship (unless you happen to be



Crugar). For fourteen weeks you will need to feed 40 members of the ship's crew plus yourself, your guests and your staff and any animals you take on. This doesn't count any time on shore during the actual hunting itself, or any of the other assorted gear you will need on the ground. This can be a logistical nightmare. The biggest problem here becomes the size and weight capacity of the ship's hold. Only a very large schooner is capable of handling the immense quantities of cargo and supplies necessary for this journey.

In my previous article "Expedition! Part One" (First Mullen Issue #1, Volume #1), I gave detailed instructions for the well-bred on how to pack for any adventure into the wilds. In traveling to Delsha there are some additional obstacles that must be overcome in order to arrive safely and to ensure good nutrition for the entire logistical staff. After following the instructions in the Mullen issue, please see the notes below on how to calculate food and water needs for the journey to Delsha: (If it doesn't all fit in the hold, some can be lashed on deck, but it is best just to charter a larger or additional vessel.)

In the *DT* expedition we would have a crew of 40 on the schooner, a staff of 12, myself, one guest and two thombos. Feeding 55 people and 2 thombos for 20 weeks is not only a costly endeavor, it is a weighty one. Please see the appendix at the back of this month's issue: "Expedition Logistics" for calculations assistance for your own expedition.

### **Food:**

For each crew member of the ship add 20 weeks of rations. The better the rations, the quicker the journey and the more singing will be heard among the ship's rigging. Twenty weeks' rations will only give you four weeks on the ground. If you plan to stay longer, remember to adjust this amount accordingly. The cost for 20 weeks rations for an average crew of 40 men at 40 yule a day per man is 2 gemstars, 2 gemclusters, 4 gems. (These better

quality rations are guaranteed not to rot if kept dry for 6 months) Each man/day of food weighs about 1.5 kilograms (3 pounds).

For each member of your personal staff, don't forget an equivalent amount of rations. For a staff of 12, rations for 20 weeks add up to 6 gemclusters, 7 gems, 2 links.

For yourself and your guests, add in a few gemules a day to make sure you are receiving your wine with each meal and quality spices and meats. The cost for 20 weeks rations for yourself and one guest is 1 gemcluster, 6 gems, 8 links. (60 yule a day per person, Kesht quality rations) Figure a weight of 2 kilograms per man/day.

### **Water:**

Figure 19 liters (5 gallons) of water for all members of the ship and staff per person each day for eating, drinking and personal hygiene. Lower this amount at your own risk, as the first thing most toths usually skimp on is personal hygiene. The stench can be alarming! In our example that would mean stowing 111,720 liters (29,514 gallons) of water, weighing in at 111,115 kilograms (244,966 pounds). Each 50 gallon barrel weighs 9 kg (20 pounds) empty. You will need 591 barrels to hold the water. They cost 50 gemules each. Cost: 2 gemclusters, 9 gems, 5 links, 50 yule. Weight: 5361 kg (11,820 pounds) of barrels. Each barrel will be filled and stowed aboard for 10 yule. Cost: 5 gems, 9 links, 10 yule.

Figure 10 gallons of water a day for yourself and your guest. Giving up a hot bath daily is an absolute necessity due to weight requirements. That comes to 10,599 liters (2800 gallons). 56 more barrels. 508 kg (1120 pounds) empty, 11,050 kg (24,360 pounds) full. Cost for barrels, filling and loading: 3 gems, 3 links, 60 yule.

### **Pack Animals:**

Bochigon do not travel by ship. They are too unwieldy and have the added risk of capsizing the vessel. For all oversea journeys



take along a thombo. Figure a thombo weighs 680 kg (1500 pounds). It costs 10 yule a week to feed him 4.5 kg (10 pounds) of feed a day. He also goes through 38 liters (10 gallons) of water a day. On our journey, we are going to take two thombos as pack animals.

### **Summary Totals:**

**Weight: 152, 687 kg (336,617 pounds) or 152.67 metric tons /150.27 (long) tons**

**Cost: 3 gemstars, 5 gemclusters, 7 links, 80 yule (3507,80)**

**Total number of 50 gallon water barrels: 703**

Through this example I am hoping to demonstrate that going to Delsha by ship is a trip that requires months of preparation and planning. Finding the right ship(s), gathering tons of preserved food and commissioning a barrel maker for over 700 barrels all takes time and a significant amount of resources. It can easily cost you over 4 gemstars to get safely there and back. Most people simply do not have those kinds of resources. If you find you are short this amount of link, consider taking one of the few hunting tours that are offered out of Tan-Sor. More information is available on those tours below.

### **Leg One of the Journey: From Ardoth to Tan-Iricid**

#### **Traditional Methods:**

##### **Crystal Schooner via Thombo:**

As we have discussed in previous issues, the easiest way to get to Tan-Iricid from Ardoth is by taking a thombo from Ardoth to Meidrinth and hopping a lift on the luxurious crystal schooner *The Tan-Sor Star*. Thombos cost about a gemlink and travel time to Meidrinth is a little over two days. Passage aboard the schooner is much steeper, and will run you 6 gems each. The journey takes 17

days. Cargo is prohibitively expensive aboard a crystal ship, I usually send mine via Salu ship to await my arrival at the Tan-Sor skyport. Various seafaring ships also make the journey. Inquire at the port authority for recommendations. (For rates on other ways to get to Tan-Iricid, please refer to the Second Auss Issue #2, Volume #1 of *DT* in the article entitled "Big Game Hunting in Drail.")

### **From Jasp to Tan-Iricid**

Again, I would have to recommend the Jaspian Crystal Schooner *The Tan-Sor Star*, just pick her up at her home skyport. Jaspian citizens not only get preferred rates on board all Crystal Ships, but they also get guaranteed passage through to their destination. The ticket office will not quote Jaspian citizen rates to anyone without the proper documentation. For all ex-patriots living in Jasp, make your way to the skyport at Port Garla. Passage from Jasp to Tan-Iricid via *The Tan-Sor Star* can be purchased for 1 gemcluster. Travel time is unknown. Please inquire at your local ticket agency.

### **Leg Two of the Journey: From Tan-Iricid to Delsha**

#### **Chartering a Ship:**

I have hired out the same Salu ship and her crew many times over the past two decades. Her name is *The Arenth*. Hailing from Anasan, she is crewed by former Human and Woffen sailors of my father's company. Her captain, a tall Woffen redcoat named Gaarf Whenter, is a long time friend. Due to the weight of supplies, passage takes about 8 weeks from Tan-Sor to the eastern shores of Delsha and only 7 weeks back. I never feel more at home than when I am settled upon his tightly sealed tub in the cabin he keeps expressly for my use.

The journey is long and arduous. The seas and ocean west of Drail are unforgiving, with terrible storms, and great monsters that emerge



from the depths to play with a ship like a toy boat. Bring along a full expedition staff and completely fill the hold (and some of the deck) with your supplies. Many years ago, chartering *The Arenth* cost me 1 gemcluster, but Gaarf and I are old friends. It will be difficult to find a ship willing to chance the open seas this far west of friendly waters, and if it can be found, chances are she will come at a premium. There are no settlements to trade with this far west, unless you count the ports in Temauntro, which few in these parts of the world do. Expect to pay double or triple that amount to secure a vessel and crew. Consider it good insurance to look into the captain and crew of your vessel very closely. It will not pay you to be rowed ashore in Delsha only to be stranded by an unscrupulous bunch of confidence men. Hire only those ships upstanding with the port authority in your city, and then only after checking a few references. This is not a pleasure cruise, and you will need hardened, experienced men and a sturdy craft to survive the journey. This is not the time to scrimp on men, transportation or supplies. Logistics are everything, and skimping on necessities will endanger yourself and your men. If you can't afford it, either tag along on a guided tour or don't go. It's that simple.

### **Guided Hunting Tours:**

There are two companies that offer guided hunting tours from Tan-Iricid to Delsha. Both run tour groups once a year during Auss. If you're serious about going to Delsha, it is best to book your reservation as soon as possible. The waiting lists with both companies are in excess of five years as of this printing. The groups are small, usually less than 10 tourists, and provide a single guide, transportation, food, water and a very limited amount of cargo space for personal supplies.

Tourism groups are just that, groups. Wandering away from the group is strictly forbidden. To those of you wishing to sneak away from camp under cover of darkness, the

ship won't break the return schedule waiting for you to board. Make last call, or start swimming home.

The first company running a yearly tour is *Cairn's Wilderland Adventures*. Cairn Marten is a middle-aged, hard-faced Human woman. She has been the Heridothian Target Shooting Club's Champion (field ram competition) for the last 4 years. She takes groups of 8 experienced hunters to western Delsha for a 2 week stay. She only offers this tour to her most experienced customers. In order to qualify to get on the waiting list you must have accompanied her on either her "*Doben-Al Desert Adventure Package*" tour or her "*Inland Drail River Basin Rafting Adventure*" tour. She will not allow anyone to sign up for the waiting list until they prove their mettle in the wilds. She says this is as much for your safety as for hers and the rest of the group. There is pack space available on the two company-provided thombos for your use while in Delsha. The trip costs 7 gemclusters a person. If you're interested, stop by the company's main office on the east side of the Tan-Sor Bazaar for a brochure.

The second (and only other company I know of) that offers a hunting trip to Delsha is *Jungle Fun*. This company is run by a hearty, experienced Bronth named Jarr, and his son Rasheh. Their offices are located two buildings down from the port authority in Tan-Sor. Jungle Fun makes one yearly trip to north-western Delsha. Clear your calendar, as it will take a full 27 weeks. Rasheh runs the business end, and he will be happy to inform you of prices and additional side trips available (at extra cost) during your Delsha adventure. Unlike Wilderland Adventures, Jungle Fun provides six armed Bronth guards along with Jarr's expert guide skills, transportation, food and water. No cargo space is available on the ship until the return journey. If you can't store it in your semi-private stateroom, it's not going aboard. No thombos. No exceptions. Skinning and taxidermy services are available for an



additional fee. Inquire at the office for details. Cost: 9 gemclusters. The waiting list is 7 years as of this printing. I have known Jarr for years and highly recommend both his services and his company.

### **Unorthodox Methods:**

Although there are no easily reachable warps, at least one does exist. This is how my I manage to travel swiftly back and forth between Delsha and the population centers. This warp location is for sale at my offices in Ardoth. (Cash and carry, no IOUs. no resale rights) This particular location warps you onto a skyrealm above the southern coastline of Delsha. It is a stable, naturally occurring warp that is best traveled in Auss or Eris for easiest access to the Delshan mainland. From Ardoth the journey by ship will take five weeks, with a further two weeks overland to the warp site. From Tan Sor, it will take 3 weeks by ship with a further two weeks overland as well. But alas, perhaps I've already said too much.

### **The Skyrealm Karamodrij**

The skyrealm route offers you the availability of fresh water. Nothing on the skyrealm is edible without hilc. Be sure to bring adequate supplies for the entire journey as mentioned above in the more traditional methods. The warp is large enough to allow thombo and talmaron through, and if you have a beaster worth his mettle their natural fright of warps will not be an issue.

Measuring a full two kilometers square, it has more than enough room to house your talmaron without the need to wallow miserably in their stench. The beaster (who often smells worse than his charges) and your beasts can be easily sequestered away to one corner down wind, sparing your delicate olfactories. If you do purchase this warp location, you will undoubtedly come across the remains of my base camp. Feel free to use the fire pit and the stocks on the south side of the skyrealm. There are crystal deposits here for those willing to

repel under the skyrealm itself. We have yet to find any large deposits freely available from the surface.

The skyrealm floats just under a kilometer above the southern Delsha coastline during Auss and Eris and it is an easy matter to fly down by talmaron at your leisure. There is no feeling like the wind on your hair as you descend to a waiting adventure. Urge the beast to exceed a comfortable speed to increase the giddiness. They often balk for no reason, as I have yet to kill one outright landing in the trees at a full dive. The beaster may have had to put one or two down, though I don't quite recall.

I usually maintain a base camp on the skyrealm and travel about either by talmaron, or on foot. Camping on the ground is extremely hazardous, due to predators large and small. Unfortunately in most cases, it is necessary.

## **ON DELSHA**

### **Climate:**

The environment is hot and muggy overall, as the continent is situated on Jorune's equator. The steamy heat is a relatively constant 35 degrees centigrade (95 degrees Fahrenheit) with 90%+ humidity. Although the plant life here seems to thrive in it, simply breathing can be oppressive and carrying heavy packs or doing hard labor is difficult – if not impossible. Relief can be found from the heat (but not the humidity) in the mountains, where temperatures regularly drop to 10 degrees centigrade nightly (about 50 degrees Fahrenheit). However, it is not a good idea to camp in the mountains as a heavy fog blankets the area immediately after sunset to an hour or two after sunrise. The thickness of the fog cover is surprising, and it is not unusual for visibility to be limited to about 3 meters. Barring a watch of a dozen men, your camp will be left utterly defenseless.

Delsha has heavy seasonal rains nine months out of the year. Auss is the only time it is generally dry enough to travel the Delshan outback. If you do find yourself there during



any other season of the year, expect deluging downpours from about 7 to 11 in the morning, and again between 3 and 7 in the afternoon. It will be almost impossible to light a fire, even with flammable oils. Jungle rots of the feet and legs run rampant at these times of the year and can be fatal if you are unable to dry and treat the area sufficiently. In most places the plant growth is so lush it blocks most of the light from ever hitting the forest floor. The lighting is dim and has a greenish cast. Occasionally you may find an outcropping of rock on a mountainside to get your bearings, but these are far between.

### **Landforms:**

The landforms on Delsha vary from steamy tropical river basins and brackish mangroves to fog covered mountainous jungles. Other skyrealms exist, but are limited. Despite their small numbers, careful inspection of the forest floor will reveal many ancient birthing sites of these floating isho islands. The rich crystal veins that were exposed as the skyrealm took flight, have long been covered over by soil deposits, plants and other debris.

Two large rivers divide the eastern island of Delsha, each reaching eastward to the great Western Ocean. Where the rivers meet the open waters, mangrove forests have developed with brackish waters. The roots of the trees delve deep into the waters here and reach an astounding size and girth. Tidal action causes marked changes in water levels in both rivers. Flooding and receding water affect an area within 30 kilometers (about 20 miles) of the eastern shore several times a day. Further inland, both rivers go through a series of rapids and large waterfalls, although they are one of the best ways to get around Delsha, care must be exercised.

The rivers have carved broad valley basins through the forests over time. Oxbow lakes and pools of stagnant, foul-smelling water and decaying plant slime abound. The trees here are smaller in girth than in the mangrove forests,

but reach dizzying heights, disappearing into the dim green gloom above. There are no roads or human paths, and the easiest way to trek about is to follow animal trails. Have a machete ready, as overgrowth is common and some of the larger plants are carnivorous. Smaller streams and creeks originating from the rivers crisscross this dense jungle land. Unfortunately none of the water is fit to drink. Large patches of wild incupods can be found with some reaching almost 2 meters high. Incupod seed can be harvested here at the right time of year, but first you need to get past the reco caretakers. Quite a task, indeed!

Meeting the edges of the jungle basins are foothills that lead to the circular mountains formed by an impact with a large meteor many years ago. The mountains are not high enough to be cleared of the thick vegetation, although it does change at differing altitudes to adapt to the cooler climate. Rains in the mountains are a daily occurrence in the mornings. The trees here are shorter, and the branches are denser closer to the ground. Most stationary objects are covered with a thick growth of green glowing moss. Large animal trails can be found meandering over the mountains; caution is advised, their owners are never far behind. There are far worse things in Delsha than corondon or mandare.

Overlooking the peaks into the meteor crater beyond, you'll spy one of the last great Shanthic cities on Jorune. Large, paved open-air plazas give way to hundreds of low buildings in the traditional Shanthic architecture. A monolithic single crystal rises from the center of the city. Should you bring along optics, hundreds of Shantha can be seen lurking about the place and congregating at the base of the large crystal. This city appears to be a large enclave of Ci-Ebba Shantha, although many times I have seen envoys from other Shanthic sects. This is not the only settlement of Shantha in this part of Delsha, but I make note because it is the largest single gathering of Shantha that I have ever seen. Those readers





familiar with the Shantha will also realize the probability that most of the complex is underground, leaving the actual size and population of this place unknown. This particular place is rumored to have a special significance to the Shantha, although what that is and why, I have yet to uncover.

## THE LOCALS

Despite the common belief that Delsha is inhabited only by Shantha, one other intelligent race does indeed make it's home here. I stumbled across them quite by accident when they were crass enough to blow darts into our necks and haul us back to their village. A person of breeding must remember to be forgiving of these savages, as they really don't know any better. Although, in the end it all worked out for the best, we had more than a few perilous moments being kept captive by them. Do not be tempted to underestimate these tiny savages, not only are they proficient with the blowgun, but they also weave dysha the likes of which not even my Caji knew existed.

### JHARLYN PYGMY TRIBE

I have dubbed these little savages the Jharlyn Pygmies. The Jharlyn are very small in stature, only measuring 1 to 1.3 meters in height. Dark-haired and copper-skinned, they are so tiny, they little resemble their muadra ancestors. The language they speak is not purely Entren, or any other language you are likely to come across. The easiest way to describe it is to say that it is as close as humanoids will ever get to a Shanthic version of Entren. Half the meaning of their speech is made by sculpting isho shapes into the air. If you are familiar with the Shanthic language, it will aid you somewhat in understanding the rhythm of the language and when to look for visual cues during speech. To the ear it sounds somewhat like pigeon-Entren.

The Jharlyn live in simple grass huts raised a few meters off the jungle floor. Small rope

ladders woven of native vines provide the only entrance. They have several small settlements of about 30 inhabitants each scattered about southern Delsha. Each settlement has a common "tribe house" where the community meets for weddings, ritual ceremonies and feasts. It is not uncommon for an entire community to travel hundreds of miles to deliver a bride or attend a ceremony at a neighboring village. While visiting, they sleep in the "place of honor"- on the floor of the tribe house.

Ancient written records state the Jharlyn Pygmy tribe originated in Thantier in the years following the "Age of Monsters". Their writings refer to a magical opening (probably a warp) that led their first descendants to the Island continent of Delsha. Over the years, the written Entren has given way to a simpler pictograph-type recording system that is difficult to translate.

The pygmies have a very simple form of government. In each village, the eldest living male is given the title of what roughly translates to "the grandpa". Each "Grandpa" is the leader for his particular village. Part of his duties as "Grandpa" is to participate in the Great Council. This Great Council resolves disputes between villages over marriages, dowries, hunting grounds and heresies as well as arranging seasonal feasts and tribe-wide festivals.

Nearby the largest Jharlyn village is an indifferent settlement of Ci-Ebba Shantha. The Jharlyn revere the Ci-Ebba and bring them regular offerings of harvested tubers, roots and crystals. It is said in their written records that the Ci-Ebba came among them and cured them of a great plague after they first arrived. Ever since then, the Jharlyn have strived to emulate and appease the local Shantha. Occasionally a Shantha will take the tribe under his wing and teach them new ways of sculpting isho, resulting in their different speech patterns and some very unique and useful dysha. It also explains the disturbing row of creb heads



dangling from their lips.

In order to understand the ritual, one must understand the insect and its habits. Crebs are tiny colony insects that live on Delsha. Depending on the colony, it can consist of several hundred or several thousand of these 2 cm insects. The crebs have a dual segmented body, four legs, large mandibles and no eyes. Specialized worker crebs scavenge for “live” crystal dust using their highly refined tra-sense and feed it to each larva. As the larvae grow and mature, they become workers as well. The carnivorous crebs hunt for food in large groups of a hundred or more. Once the prey is chosen, the crebs surround it, each releasing a tiny bit of isho into the target. Eventually, the target’s energy capacities are overwhelmed, and it is literally cooked from the inside out. Once the target has been killed, the crebs use their large mandibles to tear chunks from the carcass and return it to the colony. The queen creb can lay as many as 100 eggs a day. She will only lay one other queen in her lifetime.

The Jharlyn capture a single creb and allow it to sink its mandibles into their lip. Once attached, the creb will not let go, even in death. The second segment of the body is pinched off by the pygmy’s thumb and forefinger, leaving the head held in place by the mandibles. Four times a year, each member of the community, from the newborns to the “Grandpas”, will gather in the tribe house to perform this ritual attachment. The oldest among them also have rows of creb heads lining their ears. It is their belief that doing so gives them great power, like the revered Ci-Ebba Shantha.

I do not know if this works, as I am no Caji, but I have seen some things that defy explanation.

Although it is beneath any of us, it pays to get into good graces with the “Grandpa” of a particular village. The language barrier can be quite a problem, but some of them can still read the old writings and you may be able to communicate that way. Keep in mind the foremost job of the Grandpa is matchmaker,

and take care that in the translation problems you are not suddenly finding yourself betrothed to a young Jharlyn girl. These are a simple people, and I find that Earth-tec both frightens and amuses them. Hands down, they are some of the finest guides I have ever found. Their small stature, good relations with the local Shantha and silent jungle ways allow you access to a broader range of the region than you would otherwise have on your own. They are intimately familiar with the local flora and fauna and should you become a friend of the “Grandpa” will gladly lead you hither and yon. Although, due to the language barrier, you may or may not know where you are going. They have been an enormous help to me in trying to locate the two-thailiered corondon I so desperately seek. I have gained a limited proficiency in their language, and we are able to communicate on a very base level. To ease your initial meeting with the “Grandpa” be sure to bring plenty of Sychillian wine, and if you know it, he will sing along with the Burdothian Anthem.

### THE FAUNA OF THE JUNGLE FLOOR

There are far worse things in Delsha than the common corondon or mandare. Things that are more clever and devious hunters. Some of them can be dispatched with common weapons, others are best outrun and hidden from until all threat of danger passes. You may not believe me until you see one of these creatures take down an alpha male corondon in his prime.

#### The L’aarg

This is without doubt the largest predator I have ever seen. The l’aarg will burrow its 8 meter body into the soil and send out numerous runners in a circular pattern up to twenty five meters away from its body. These runners terminate in small, blue vegetative looking buds. These buds rest quietly among the foliage as the few inches of exposed central body exude a strong “rotting flesh” odor. As the prey



is lured in at the thought of a tasty meal, the l'aarg will instantly open the small blue buds to reveal a gaping maw surrounded by 4 pinnate, hooked prehensile "fingers" and seize its prey. There is no need for the l'aarg to disturb its comfortable new resting spot to eat, as the tentacles can digest the victim, too. Large l'aarg can easily prey on an animal weighing 5 tons or more.

### **The Skait**

This medium sized furry mammalian-like animal is to Delshan predators what pibber are to woffen: a highly sought after delicacy. Living in family units of ten or more, they burrow into the ground and have a curious habit of peeping above ground thrice in succession before coming out of their holes. Weighing in at 40 pounds, it is about the size of an average dog and covered in a short coat of glossy green fur. Exclusively vegetarian, they often forage under the larger leaves, chewing on various plant stalks and roots. Upon occasion I have noted almost plague-like populations of this creature. While in a plague like state, they have been known to clear miles of the forest down to the bare earth. They will overcome and devour anything in their path. I am uncertain what triggers this population explosion, but tell-tale signs of destroyed forest and a cacophony of hooting should alert you to get out of the area immediately.

### **The Glispeen Slug**

As if glispeen sap wasn't bad enough, it now harbors a large deadly invertebrate that is extremely hostile. In the deeper places of Drail, a large slug will wrap itself around the base of the glispeen trees, disguising itself (quite adeptly) as another layer of bark. Should anything touch this "bark" by mistake, the slug has a reflex that will cause its body to wrap around the victim and digest him on the spot. Unfortunately, these creatures are only about 1.3 meters high, and not quite large enough to muffle the screams of humanoid victims. If one

of your party is taken victim, it is important to leave the area as soon as possible. Your companions screams are sure to alert larger predators in the area, and the digestive acids of the glispeen slug are of sufficient strength that there will be nothing you can do to help your friend. Remember to pay a visit to his family on your return.

## **THE FLORA**

Unlike most of the flora on the mainland, on Delsha the main color of the vegetation is blue. Many large plants grow here, in addition to two kinds of new hardwoods: one extremely light and bouyant but soft and one very dense and gnarled. Both would benefit from export. There is one to be expressly wary of: the deadly nidrous vine.

### **The Nidrous Vine**

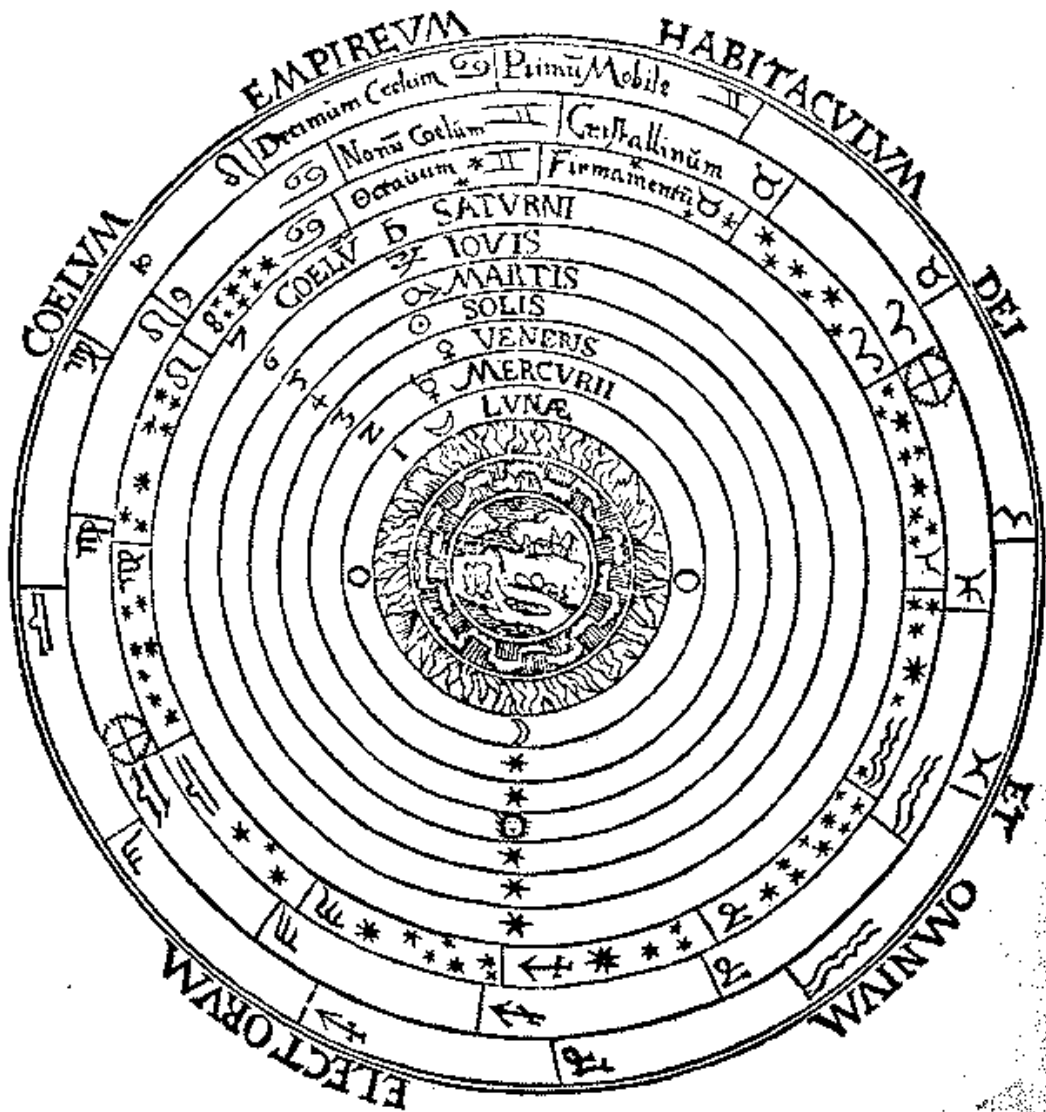
Growing up around the trees is a densely leaved blue vine with white flowers. The flowers are similar to Earth orchids in appearance, but do not let their delicate appearance fool you. If the flowers do not entice you, the fragrance surely will. Light and airy, heady and sweet all at the same time, the fragrance will lure you into the center of the patch. If you have breathers, force yourself to put one on, as inhaling too much of the perfume can knock you unconscious, and prolonged periods of inhaling it can lead to convulsions and death.

In case you're curious, after tracking the two-thailiered corondon for six weeks through the Delshan outback, I finally came face to face with him, managing nimbly to dodge his first swipe (by tripping over the beaster). As he closed on my sprawled form I managed to take yet another thailier from his hand before I was overcome by the entropy vine I landed in. Upon waking, I trailed him for another 10 days, but with half my staff gone (yet again) and supplies running low, I was forced to retreat until next year.



All in all, Delsha is a very satisfying hunting experience for those who are easily bored with the lack of challenge in more popular spots. For the well-heeled, well-equipped traveler, it can provide just the break from routine that you

might be looking for. Of course, upon your return, expect to fill your social calendar with requests to tell your tales of deepest, darkest Delsha.





## DHARWIN GOES HOBO!

BY: DHARWIN TANKETTA, ISCIN CORRESPONDENT, *DT*

**H**ello There! I'm Darwin Tanketta. I'm a klade trained field iscin. I've been invited back to write about some of the unusual sights you may encounter if you happen to be traveling in the western Sobayid and the eastern portion of the Doben-al. If you recall, the last time I wrote, I was wrapping up a trip to Tan-Iricid. I have since returned to Meidrinth aboard the *Tan-Sor Star* crystal schooner. I always make a point of spending a few days in Meidrinth every time I visit Burdoth. Meidrinth has a unique atmosphere that combines both the "rough and tumble" with the civilized. I love this city. Stopping off in Meidrinth offers travelers an opportunity to pick up supplies and information before moving on to other destinations. Most travelers stop here before moving on to The Trinnus. I stop here before heading west to the Doben-al.

My purpose for being in Meidrinth is a simple one. Aside from enjoying the sights of the city, I've taken a few days to catch up with some old friends and meet up with a business partner who has brought me some bio-tec goods from Sillipus. I am delivering these goods to a client to make good on a promise. I spend my time here wisely; purchasing food, water, medicine, camping gear and a thombo and cart. I very seldom ride, preferring to walk. This trip will be no exception. Part of being a field iscin is being observant of your surroundings. I find that you just miss out or otherwise simply fail to notice much of the land around you when riding. So, I prefer to walk. I make my last stop at a machine shop and foundry on Vanda's way near the Gundon gate. I purchase a wind powered water pump here that will be used in the construction of a windmill at my journeys end. The pump lightens my purse by 3 gems. The price is steep, but when water is scarce as it is throughout most of the Sobayid, you pay what

you need to pay. The clep hands help me load the pump into the cart and tie everything down. Thombo can be skittish and one can never be too careful when moving valuable machinery.

I set off on the road northwest out of Meidrinth. The term road may be a bit of an overstatement. I prefer "clearly marked trail". The walk is pleasant, though a little on the dusty side. You are not alone on the road. You can expect to meet other travelers several times during course of the day. Today for example, I ran across a group of eight Thriddle and one very large Corastin hauling sapple paper from Ko Dira down to Meidrinth. I stop and greet them. My "mastery" of triddis catches them off guard and quickly puts everyone at ease. Well, all except the Corastin who simply leans on his club and leers at me. I lean on my long walking stick and smile. I take the time to visit with the people I come across. I've found that taking the time to chat, exercise good manners and stir up a little good will goes a long way. Today is no exception. The Thriddle are kind enough to inform me about a small pack of dharmee about three miles up the road. Apparently the pack wasn't so small when they first stumbled upon it. It makes good sense to travel with Corastin or Croid if you have the opportunity. I wish the Thriddle a safe journey and part company with them; the Corastin still leering at me. I have no problem avoiding the Dharmee. The Corastin made quite a mess on the side of the road. I simply steer the thombo off the road and skirt the area quickly. Lingering in the area would be tempting fate and I have a long trip in front of me. I like to walk because it also give you time to think. The foremost thought on my mind right now is how much I can't stand thombo. They smell. They are jumpy and get stubborn if you don't give them ample time to graze.

The afternoon passes pretty uneventfully. I



run across a single scragger. I see him about fifty yards ahead of me on the trail. I stop and tap the thombo spike into the ground. The thombo shuffles to one side and tests the tether and spike and puffs out a snotty grunt. The scragger stiffens, hearing the thombo and breaks into a run, heading straight for me.

I had hoped to sneak up on the little fellow. No matter. I have my lucky walking stick with me. There is a large rock off on the left side of the road. I scoot over and stand about six feet from the rock and wait there with my walking stick. The scragger sees me move and makes a beeline for me. I seem to only run into the hungry ones. The scragger is chittering loudly at this point, which is not so good. I am going to have an opportunity to chat with all his little scragger buddies if I don't take care of business quickly here. In a setting like this, patience is the key. I stand and wait. The scragger is running. I see his teeth. I see his claws. I stand. I wait. I begin to swing as the scragger ducks and lunges.

They always duck before they jump. The scragger launches himself, mouth wide open. My walking stick neatly connects with his open maw. The scragger bites down hard. The scragger is heavy and I strain to carry through with my swing and bring the scragger down hard on the rock, head first. The scragger is dead. I fetch my knife from my pack and collect his skerrids and decide to keep my knife with me. I hop up on the rock and look around. Nope. No little scragger buddies. A few hours later, I am looking at the village of Nodis.

Nodis is a growing woffen jer station of almost 60 full time residents. Many jer use Nodis as a jumping off point for travel into the Trinnus. Nodis boasts ferry service across the Cavis River. The Trinnu jungles are only a few hours south of the river. Most of the common services you would expect to find can be had here. Nodis boast a small but amply supplied clep where you can purchase food, water, most common camping gear and a few pack animals. There is a caji learsis here. Dirdeh Ahndin is a

small muadra woman with a big smile. She keeps a plentiful supply of the Acostin limilate for slasher's rot on hand. She is very charming and is well liked by the entire community. There is also a thriving inclep here. The establishment is called Wan-dugs and is the center of the community. The place specializes in woffen meals. I stop and pick up some pibber chews and a quick mug of rusper. The day is especially hot and the rusper goes down easily. There is a public well here in Nodis. There is no charge for using the well to replenish your water, though on hot days such as today, you will have to wait your turn at the well.

Travelers stand under the cloth awnings of the inclep, learsis and small stocks waiting for their turn. Life is unhurried and uncomplicated here. There are Scarmis living on the north side of town. Their small huts are walled by rush fences. Three of them stand off to the side of the road and stare at me. I look through their rush fences and see dharmee hides, stretched and tanning in the sun. I share my news about the dharmee I encountered earlier in the day. This excites the Scarmis and they quickly duck back inside their huts and reemerge with knobbed clubs and knives. The Scarmis skitter down the trail to the east and quickly pass out of sight. "Go get'em boys!"

I travel for another hour and realize that my thombo is about to call it quits for the day. Thombo require several hours to graze. I have really never understood this. Thombo insist on grazing even if fodder is readily available. Did I mention that Thombo are stupid? I move off the road and set up camp. This is as far as I am going to get today.

I set out early trying to make up lost time. I had planned to get as far as Ko Peh yesterday, but the thombo had other ideas. I pick up the pace a bit and have no trouble reaching Ko Peh by late morning. Ko Peh is a Thriddle village that punctuates the southern edge of a great stretch of coditch fields that extends north to Ko Dira. Ko Peh exports much of its coditch



harvest. There really isn't much to see here unless you have always found coditch farming to be absolutely fascinating. I keep to the main road that runs straight through the coditch fields. I have to be honest here and confess that I snitched a coditch... but the thombo snitched a dozen before we were scolded back onto the road by some rather irate Thriddle. I blame and scold the thombo. Do you think I fooled them? Naw, probably not. Coditch is much like terran corn, though nowhere near as tasty. I manage a few bites and throw a coditch to the thombo, who ungraciously snaps it up and loudly chews as we walk. It's hot in the fields and the Thriddle quickly lose interest in scolding us and return to their labors. This is a very boring stretch of road. There is coditch and more coditch.

You emerge from the coditch fields to find yourself on the outskirts of the village of Ko Dira. Ko Dira is a thriddle village, well known for its paper products. Fine sapple paper of varying weight is produced here and is shipped to both Meidrinth and Ardoth. I hurry through this small village while remembering the last time I passed through here. I seem to recall being the unlucky target of a group of querrids that had stopped off here on their way to Cosahmi. I shudder and pick up the pace.

I arrive in Gundon early in the evening. The village of Gundon is something to write about. The village is marked by its collection of warehouses, stables and food preparation cleps. There are only minimal facilities for travelers here. The village is more of a rendez-vous point than a village. Shipments of various crops trade hands here. The Bhinsu Brothers, Durssi, Laudan, Clersin and Thoss, run a near monopoly on everything from food preparation, to auctioning, to dreyage. Several large warehouses are busy late into the night, shipping and receiving cargos of fruits, grains and vegetables and even livestock from the Cavran Plateau. It is necessary for foodstuffs to go through various preparations to facilitate easy shipping and to reduce spoilage during

transit. During daylight hours, the center of the village is a buzz of buyers and sellers, hawking their produce and animals. This tiny village is one of the only places that I have ever seen where one can buy terran seed stocks in quantity for reasonable money. I always make a point of buy flowers and vegetable seed every time I come through Gundon.

I arrive late enough to be totally out of luck in finding room in an inclep, so I decide to sleep in the thombo cart. I am awakened before daybreak to the sound of carts, hawkers and buyers. There are easily 500 people here preparing for the market to open and the sun hasn't even come up. It's unfortunate that I won't be able to stay the day to see how things progress. I have no trouble at all buying 10 pounds of potatoes from two small kids trying to make a couple of extra yule. I wander for a few mintues more and pick up some special "sundries" that may come in handy later in my trip. Potatoes are never a bad choice when traveling. They are tasty, nutritious and easy to prepare. I throw the potatoes in the back of the cart with the rest of my gear and tag along with a bochigon caravan that is heading to Laindis.

Traveling with the bochigon caravan is a stroke of good luck. There is always safety traveling in numbers. One of the bochigon riders invites me to ride with him. We trade introductions. He introduces himself as Kedrin Thalmis. My thombo is oblivious as ever and has to be tied to the bochigon. After a few minutes of half hearted complaining, the thombo seems to get the idea to follow along or be dragged by the bochigon. I learn that Kedrin makes the trip from Laindis to Gundon every five days. He buys shipments of whatever he thinks will bring a good price in Gundon. He tells me that unfortunately Gundon doesn't really have much to offer him for the return trip to Laindis. We settle into pleasant conversation and the time passes quickly. Kedrin has hopes of starting a direct run from Laindis to Ardoth, bypassing the merchant caravans of Gundon and cutting out the middleman altogether. He is



an enterprising young man.

Before I know it we are at the village of Shamin. Village is again a bit of an overstatement. Shamin is a klade station that sells dothibider meat and hides. Kedrin tells me that old man Modhen who heads up the klade here has been having problems for the last couple of weeks. Apparently someone or something is making off with dothibider from their herds. Old man Modhen is offering a sizeable reward to put an end to the pilfering. There are no accomodations here for travellers, though there are bunkhouses on the west side of the station that old man Modhen will rent out for 5 yule a night. The bunkhouses are absolutely spartan boasting only canvas-covered cots to sleep on. It is certainly better than sleeping on the ground. I help my new-found traveling companions as best as I can with unloading the bochigon and the thombo and tending to the animals.

It is getting dark as I finish putting pen to paper. There is something special here in the Sobayid; watching the sun set. Sitting around an open fire on camp stools. Eating dinner at a leisurely pace. Everyone seems to have brought something special with them. Kendin produces a watermelon from out of nowhere. The other bochigon rider is Feylen. He has been quiet for most of the trip and has spoken perhaps a dozen complete sentences all day. Feylen opens his pack and pulls out of long bottle of Vhod-Ca potatoe liquor and empties the bottle into the melon. Yoiks! I reach into my pack and pull out Tobacco that I had picked up in the Gundon market. Yep, nothing beats watching the sun set here in the Sobayid.

I am awakened by Kendin's boot. The animals are loaded and ready to go. The skies clouded up overnight and a light drizzle begins to fall as we set out on our way. By midmorning, the drizzle becomes light rain. I don't think I need to mention that thombo smell worse when they are wet, if such a thing is possible. I make a mental note to myself. Next time bring thombo perfume. The thombo really

reeks. The rain lets up after midday and the humidity is just absolutely oppressive. There are puddles everywhere now as we stumble up on the town of Laindis. Laindis is situated on the Carvis road, midway between Sobay and Cavis and receives a fair amount of mercantile traffic. Visitors are fairly common here. I wish I could take the road south from Laindis and make the trip south to Cavis. This is by far some of the most fertile field land on Jorune when it comes to growing earth crops. The Dharsage of Burdoth has taken special interest in the Cavis Plateau and the surrounding field lands. A klade brother of mine confided in me once that the Dharsage has invested a considerable amount of resources in experimental agricultural efforts, including the introduction of several terran animals, grown from embryonic stocks that were found during and shortly after the energy weapons war. If tales are to be believed, the Dharsage has set up several such experimental lerrin in the region between Laindis and Cavis.

The heat and humidity are just unbearable today. The rain earlier in the day didn't really help much to cool things off. It's only midday and I still have a long ways to go. I travel on the Doben-al road and make my way through the northern part of the city. I stop and buy some Laindin travel cakes from a small clep on the road side at the edge of town. These Laindin travel cakes are a mixture of wheat flour and the local haudis berries. My purse is starting to run a bit thin and that's ok. In a few days, yule and links are going to be worth a whole lot as I continue west. There's a lot to see in Laindis and along the road south to Cavis. I am hoping that I will be able to take some time and perhaps make the trek on my return trip.

I set out on the Doben-al road north and west out of Laindis. After only a few hours walking, one begins to notice a marked change in the land. It is nowhere near as humid as you approach the Doben-al. The heat is really starting to become bothersome. The thombo is





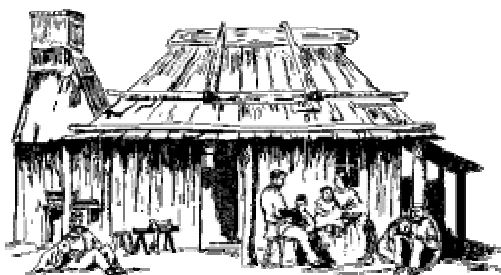
not liking this at all. I look behind me and see a group of people about three quarters of a mile back, heading in my direction. That is one definite plus about travelling in these parts. The ground is remarkably flat and visibility is generally good.

As they approach, I realize that they are Muadra. I guess that they are pilgrims from the Ishara in Meidrinth. As they get closer, I stop the thombo and lean on my walking stick. The four Muadra stop about ten paces away and look at me. I see that one recognizes the Atterol klade patch on my jacket. He greets me as "Learned Iscin". I return the greeting and call him "Pious Traveller". I ask if they have come from Meidrinth. They tell me they have. I tell the four that I am from the Atterol klade and joke that they should have made their travel plans known to me earlier. The four of them smile. I ask if they are heading to Zadri's Keep and they tell me that they are heading to that very place. I introduce myself as Dharwin. The four introduce themselves in turn. They are Salli, Bedriin, Tomas and Klyde. I extend the hospitality of my cart if they wish to ride. All four politely decline, preferring instead to walk with me and keep me company. The rest of the day is filled with one of the longest question and answer sessions that I have ever endured. I remark that the four of them have a promising future as querrids, if they are unable to complete their studies at the Ishara. Their

laughter is only half hearted and I quickly realize that I may have made a social blunder. This trip is of much greater importance to these young Muadra than I had first guessed.

The trek from Laindis to Zadri's Keep is a desolate one. There is not much of anything out here. Zadri's Keep was built centuries ago as an outpost to keep watch on the Doben-al and spot Crugar raiders. I recall that the Muadra of Meidrinth travel here periodically to participate in a ritual called "The Survival Run". The sun sets and we continue to walk. I think marching is probably a more appropriate term. The Muadra are in a hurry to get to Zadri's Keep. The Keep has to be close now. I excuse myself and grab the bag that I picked up from the road side vendor in Laindis. "Here, take these. They will keep you strong", I say. The four Muadra look curiously in the bag and pull the Laindan travel cakes from their wrappers. "I shall cheer for you tomorrow." All four of the young Muadra grin at me. In the distance, silhouetted against the night sky, stands the ancient stone blocks that form the base of Zadri's Keep.

I am at the halfway point of my journey and my story. Have you guessed why I have chosen to come to the Doben-al? Have you guessed my business here? If you think you know, write me and tell me ([ddharwintanketta@tahoo.com](mailto:ddharwintanketta@tahoo.com)). Join me next time for the final leg of my Doben-al saga.





## THE BEST EATS IN ARDOTH

BY: DITHERS MC WHOLL  
CULINARY CORRESPONDENT, *DT*

Ardoth is the largest city on Jorune, filled to brimming with the widest variety of local and international fare to be found anywhere. A plethora of fine restaurants serving exquisitely prepared delicacies awaits you in the winding streets of Humanity's City by the Sea. Ardoth is a veritable tour de force for the educated palate. In that spirit, only those restaurants rating a full seven moons will be listed here for your enjoyment. Food need not be prohibitively expensive to rate a full seven moons, yet the surroundings and ambiance are taken into account. The establishments must be scrupulously clean and the service second to none.

If you are a visitor to Ardoth, duck past the young criers on the docks promising you a good meal (they're paid by the head), and follow my advice to the real thing.

**Harbil's Freeze:** Looking for a delightful snack? Than look no further than Ardoth's Bazaar. Go to Harbil's Freeze to enjoy the tastiest confection you'll ever lay your tastebuds to: Haspil Berry Freeze. Go early in the morning, as only one batch a day is made. Ran Harbil, the Muadra propieter, is middle-aged and graying a bit at the temples. Put simply, he is one of the nicest Muadra you'll ever meet, quick with a joke- but elusive with his recipe. His smiling service and outstanding product are what keeps his customers coming back for more. The line is always long, but the wait is worth it. Ran mixes up a secret recipe of haspil berries and baliim sugars in huge kettles over an open fire early in the morning. One of his Croid assistants will then pour the hot syrup into a huge barrel. This barrel is then lifted inside an even larger barrel filled with ice and salt. A huge yoke is attached and the Croid take

turns turning the mixture barrel inside the iced one. What comes out is pure frozen ambrosia, the likes of which you have never tasted. Scooped into a sweetened durlig-wafer bowl, it can be eaten with no utensils. At a mere 20 gemules, it will make your day. Word to the wise: Don't tease the Croid. They understand Entren.

**Whispering Sands:** Speaking of Muadra cuisine, when was the last time you sat on the floor and shared a bowl of spiced, dried durlig porridge with complete strangers? Sen Nara, the proprietor, originally hailed from the eastern Doben-Al. She does her best to make you feel like one of the tribe from the moment you walk in the door. All seating is random, basically wherever you can pull up a pillow close enough to dip a hand in one of the many large hardwood bowls scattered across the floor. The porridge is spiked with hile to allow you to enjoy the jerked and grilled crill on a stick that just magically keep appearing in front of you. People from all walks of Ardothian life regularly dine here, including Winston and myself. The porridge goes down silky smooth with a pitcher of white house wine. You never know who you may share a bowl with, and that is half the fun. A great place to mix and mingle, drink and be merry. 40 gemules to get in the door, pitcher of wine is another 10.

**Tampopo:** If there was ever good cause to be caught in a food fight, dueling chefs may be the best of all. The owner of Tampopo is a pure strain human originally from Thantier, although the reasons why he left are unclear. He stands tirelessly behind a polished hardwood counter stirring huge kettles of soup, boiled thombo meat and durlig flour noodles. His stall (and that of his competitor) is situated in the busy



financial district. Every day at lunch time, the line wraps around the block. After waiting forty-five minutes to an hour, you are asked only one question at the counter, “Dai or Sho?” Big or small. This may at first seem to be a simple question, but in fact there is much more to it than meets the ear. The portions are immense. Those who can finish the Dai –large- get the honor of having their name engraved on a plaque in the shop. The pressure to have one’s name associated with such vogue eatery is tremendous, and many customers fail shamefully in the attempt. Only the bravest and hungriest need even attempt it. The soup and noodles are served up in a dinner plate sized bowl with several 2” thick pieces of boiled thombo thrown on top. Eat quickly. If the chef sees your empty bowl, he will refill it, and insist you honor him by eating it. ALL of it. Eating two Sho servings will not get your name on the plaque. 40 gemules and a long wait, but very tasty soup, even if you must eat it in a hurry.

**Ranjeeda :** Want to try Tampopo’s competition? You’ll find them right across the street. Rumor has it that a Muadra (masquerading as a boy) once worked for Tampopo, stole his recipe and opened up right across the street. Neither chef is talking. But the competition is fierce. Right now a bowl of durlig noodle soup and thombo steak runs you 30 yule at Ranjeeda. But more importantly- there is no pressure to eat it all. Many shamed Tampopo customers (those who were unable to eat their large servings) often duck in here at lunch for a week or two until they feel safe the Tampopo chef will not remember their faces – tipping well for the privilege. Shorter wait. Great soup. Great, enthusiastic service.

**Woethi’s:** Looking for a howling good time? We have just the place. Take a walk down by the docks and duck into Woethi’s. Woethi’s isn’t just for sailors anymore. Woethi’s is now famous for “The Pibber Pit”. The Pit is a 15’ by 20’ cage situated in the center of the room. Inside the cage are about 50

young pibber and four buckets of various dipping sauces. The object of the game is to beat the current record of eating 7 live pibber in 2 minutes. After paying his fee, the challenger is escorted to the cage door and a bell at the bar is rung. The challenger is shoved inside the cage for his two minutes. If that’s not enough of a challenge, each of the patrons is handed a small cane at the door. While the challenger is in the cage, a hundred canes are tapped rhythmically on the floor – cheering the challenger on and... causing the pibber to thist. At the end of two minutes six beaters (Woffen with big sticks) are sent in the cage to extract the diner. The pibber are then herded to the back to calm down, and a fresh batch is brought in for the next challenger. Thivin bookies line one wall, posting odds on the boards behind them. For the price of 50 gemules, you too can have your go in the cage. Should you manage to beat the current record, you win the hefty 1 gem purse and bragging rights at Woethi’s. But don’t just go for the entertainment. Woethi’s also offers some of the tastiest baby pibbers to be had in Ardoth. 30 gemules buys you all you can eat pibber (raw, boiled, fried, or roasted) with your choice of dipping sauce. Try the boneless pibber tenders!

**Crenshel’s Catch:** Got a hankering for some seafood? I’m not talking about fish brits, either. I’m talking about huge, red-meat fish steaks blackened to perfection with appetizers of some of the finest edible shellfish on Jorune. Unlike the first few restaurants on my list, a visit to Crenshel’s requires a shirt, a shave and decent weight in your purse. Crenshel’s offers the finest in Jorune Opera every Tuesday and Thursday night. They regularly book tasteful traveling troupes of players, singers and live entertainers to provide some of the finest dining ambiance to be found in the city. Add to that, the dim blue glow of the slug lamps and glow moss, and you’ve found the perfect place to propose, celebrate an anniversary or simply wine and dine to your heart’s content. The menu is dependant on the catch of the day, and

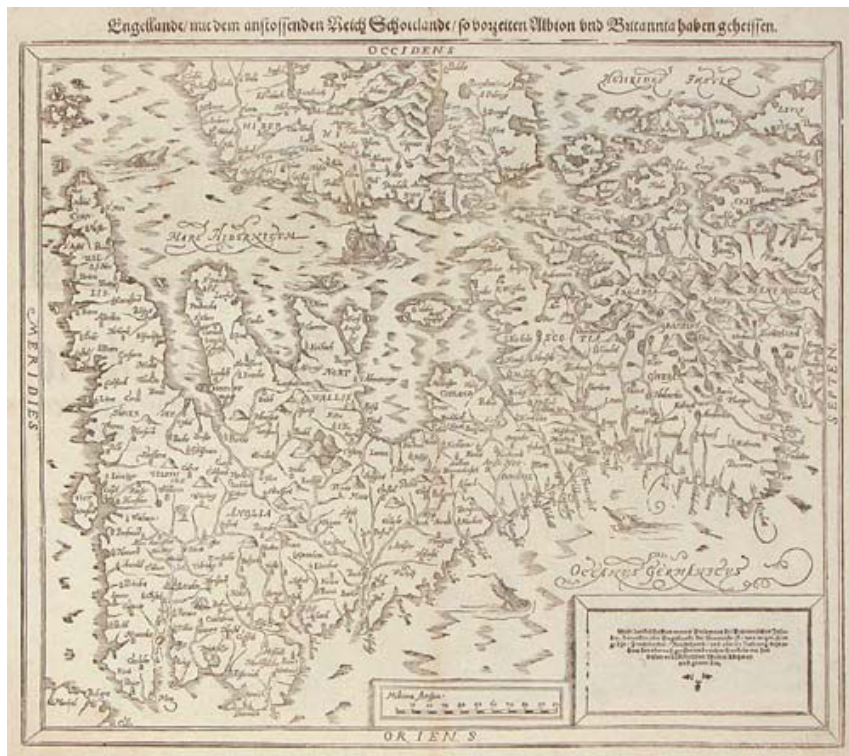


a bottomless cup is included. It is difficult, but not impossible to get a reservation. A week or two ahead should suffice. Name dropping works well. Dinner, drinks, entertainment and impeccable service cost (on average) 1 link 50 yule. But well worth the time, trouble and money.

**Klek:** Looking for the place to hobnob with Kesht and Keshtia? The hottest place around right now is Klek, a fusion cuisine bistro. Klek offers private dining in curtain-enclosed booths, or public dining in a splendid dining room. A central fountain inside the main dining room tinkles softly in the background as you dine on wilted durlig salad with escarnaught roe, tangy pickled creshi and coditch pilaf, and if you're feeling adventurous try the ground

vintch tartar with thombo eye dipping sauce. The flavors are delightfully subtle and complex. Known widely for it's newest menu addition – white hilc wine (superior even to Sychillian wine but with hilc!) it is quickly becoming the most sought after dinner spot in town. Reservations are mandatory, and plan on two or three weeks to get a table, longer for private dining. Sumptuous dinner is followed by dancing on Fridays. Open Tuesday through Saturday. Drenn or better challisk required. Proper attire is required, 20% gratuity is added to the check for parties of 6 or more.

Enjoy your stay in Ardoth, and if you do happen to patronize one of these fine establishments – tell them *DT* sent you.





## DHARWIN'S POKE IT WITH A STICK!

BY: DHARWIN TANKETTA, ISCIN CORRESPONDENT, *DT*

**H**ello there! I'm Dharwin Tanketta. I'm a klade-trained field Iscin. As a field Iscin, I often have the opportunity for wilderness travel. I want to take this opportunity to share some of my observations on wildlife that you may encounter during the course of your travels.

I am currently traveling in the western Sobayid. It is an arid land, not without it's own special charm and beauty... not without it's own special dangers. I felt that it would be a good time to describe some of the plants and animals you might encounter while traveling across the open Sobin plain between Laindis and Zadri's Keep.

### BHANDU SWINE

These are feral razor back pigs that have survived with a passion in the Sobayid since the fall of the earth colonies. Known for their ferociousness, the bhandu swine are hunted for their meat, skins and tusks. These pigs do not have discriminating palettes, dining on roots, tubers, grasses, insects and just about anything else that doesn't put up too much resistance. These feral pigs seem to thrive in the Sobayid. Their burrows keep them out of the hot Sobayid sun and protect them from any large predators that might happen along. The pig population does on occasion become a problem, prompting local towns people and farmers to organize hunts. Their numbers are also kept in check by occasional rainfall. (See below) Note: If Bhandu swine can eat it, you probably can too.

### BHANDU FLAT WORMS (POKE IT WITH A STICK)

The bhandu flatworm appears only after occasional rain showers in the western Sobayid. The worm can be found in the rain puddles that dot the arid plain after the rains. Adult specimens grow to approximately three feet in length and weight approximately 20 pounds. The worm is equally at home on land or in the water. Each of it's 18 legs sports a small barb that secretes a powerful paralytic poison. If threatened or molested, the bhandu flatworm lifts it's tail end in the air and slaps at an opponent with it body. If the worm is successful in striking an opponent, the worm will inflict multiple stings which quickly down even large predators in a matter of seconds. The bhandu flatworm lays it's eggs on the bodies of it's victims. Larval flatworms hatch about 72 hours later and devour the hapless host. The young flatworms grow quickly, reaching adulthood in less than a week. As the rain puddles evaporate, the bhandu flatworms often burrow into the ground and enter a type of suspended animation, waiting until the rains come once again.

### DEMELOT

The demelot is a purple fist sized puffball like fungus that also can only be found on the day following a rain shower on the Sobayid. The fungus is the primary ingredient in the doursal limilate. One dose of doursal limilate entirely eliminates a humans need for water for three days. The following three days must be spent in rest, recuperation and rehydration. Use of this limilate is extremely expensive, dangerous and addictive. Addiction to this limilate results in "thirsting death". The



afflicted refuse all liquids and quickly die of dehydration. Demelot puffs collect up to 1 gem a piece in Laindis. The high price reflects the danger in collecting this extremely rare fungus.

### DEMELIS

#### (DO NOT POKE IT WITH A STICK)

Demelis is a shrub like plant that grows no taller than two feet in height. The plant is easily recognized by it's blue and green leaves and brilliant red berries. The berries of the demelis are not berries, but are in fact demolot fungal cultures that enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the demelis. The demelot draws liquid from the shrub until the fungal culture matures. When this happens the

“berries” explode releasing spores into the air. These spore settle on the ground and become demelot after rain showers. The demelis shrub benefits from the protection the demelot offers. The berries burst if molested. The demelot spores cause an extremely painful skin condition in terran based and joruni life that results in a slow sloughing of skin and permanent scarring.

Until next time, this is your Iscin at large, Dharwin Tanketta, wishing you safe and pleasant travels. Remember, if you see something and you don't know what it is... Follow my number one cardinal rule and POKE IT WITH A STICK!





## FOR SHOLARIS ONLY

## EXPEDITION LOGISTICS

OPTIONAL REFERENCE CHARTS  
(BASED ON 3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION RULES)

How to figure weight, costs and cargo capacities when feeding a large number of people.

*Note: to convert lbs to kg, multiply by .4535*

**Food (Dried and Preserved)**  
Based on Meager Rations 1 kg (2.2 lbs)/ a day

Group Size	1 day Cost	Weight	1 week Cost	2 weeks Cost	Weight	Weight	Per Month (30 Days) Cost	Weight
1	20 gu	2.2 lb	1gl 40gu	15 lb	2gl, 80 gu	31 lb	6 gl	66 lb
5	1 gl	11 lb	7 gl	77 lb	14 gl	144 lb	28 gl	288 lb
10	2 gl	22 lb	14 gl	154 lb	28 gl	308 lb	60 gl	660 lb
25	5 gl	55 lb	35 gl	385 lb	70 gl	770 lb	150 gl	1650 lb
50	10 gl	110 lb	70 gl	770 lb	140 gl	1540 lb	300 gl	3300 lb
75	15 gl	165 lb	105 gl	1155 lb	210 gl	2310 lb	450 gl	4950 lb



**Food (Dried and Preserved)**  
**Based on Good Rations 1.36 kg (3 lbs)/ a day**

<b>Group Size</b>	<b>1 day Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>1 week Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>2 weeks Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Per Month (30 Days) Cost</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>40 gu</b>	<b>3 lb</b>	<b>2gl 80gu</b>	<b>21 lb</b>	<b>5gl 60gu</b>	<b>42 lb</b>	<b>11gl20gu</b>	<b>90 lb</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>2 gl</b>	<b>15 lb</b>	<b>14gl</b>	<b>105 lb</b>	<b>28 gl</b>	<b>210 lb</b>	<b>56 gl</b>	<b>420 lb</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>4 gl</b>	<b>30 lb</b>	<b>28 gl</b>	<b>210 lb</b>	<b>56 gl</b>	<b>420 lb</b>	<b>112 gl</b>	<b>840 lb</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>10 gl</b>	<b>75 lb</b>	<b>70 gl</b>	<b>525 lb</b>	<b>140 gl</b>	<b>1050 lb</b>	<b>300 gl</b>	<b>2250 lb</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>20 gl</b>	<b>150 lb</b>	<b>140 gl</b>	<b>1050 lb</b>	<b>280 gl</b>	<b>2100 lb</b>	<b>560 gl</b>	<b>4200 lb</b>
<b>75</b>	<b>30 gl</b>	<b>225 lb</b>	<b>210 gl</b>	<b>1575 lb</b>	<b>420 gl</b>	<b>3150 lb</b>	<b>860 gl</b>	<b>6300 lb</b>

Water weighs 8.3 pounds per gallon at sea level.







## FOR SHOLARIS ONLY

## THE CREATURES OF DELSHA

**The L'aarg**

This huge predator is originally thought to be of Lamorri origin. The 8m long and 2m across, bulbous body is always burrowed underground and surrounded in a radial fashion by 2D10 tentacles, resembling plant runners. The only visible part of the tentacles are disguised as 8-12" budding plant material. Aside from the tentacles, two to three inches of the l'aarg's brown central body will remain exposed above ground emitting a rancid rotting flesh odor in the hopes of attracting prey. Victims lured into

the l'aarg's trap have only a fraction of a second to realize their mistake before the tentacles unfurl their budded ends to reveal gaping maws with hooked finger-like appendages. These appendages will affix themselves to the prey's body and begin devouring him from several points simultaneously. Should the l'aarg be injured, it will retract all of its tentacles into the central body cavity, where it will regenerate any missing parts in a single 27 hour day. Although not extremely mobile, the l'aarg has been known to uproot itself and burrow into new surroundings when prey becomes scarce. It can cover about 1 km a day in its search for a new hunting ground. Although it's breeding habits are undocumented, this sholari is happy to say that this predator is extremely rare in other parts of Jorune due to the lack of large prey for it to feed upon.

Number Appearing	1
Reaction	Manic
Skin Armor	Carapace
Adv. Bonus	+2
Attack Type	Bite (per tentacle)
Damage	Knife
Speed	1D4
Attack Rank	11
Defense Rank	11
To Hit at Range	Buried: 2    Mobile:12
Dyshas	None
Isho	None
Special	Roll for number of tentacles (2D10)

**The Skait**

This furry little guy is cute enough, you may begin to see him in the Ardothian markets as pets. His glossy green fur and meticulous grooming habits in addition to their relatively congenial nature and natural curiosity makes them a great gift for children. Herbivores in their natural habitat, they are nocturnal unless a shortage of food forces them on the move. With large dark fleshy eye sockets and a prehensile tail, they are often found in highly social family groups. For unknown reasons during a complete eclipse of the Gobey moon, they will immediately seek out a mate and reproduce prolifically often

Number Appearing	1D20
Reaction	Apathetic
Skin Armor	Leather
Adv. Bonus	0
Attack Type	Bite 1
Damage	Knife
Speed	1D10
Attack Rank	4
Defense Rank	9
To Hit at Range	6
Dyshas	N/A
Isho	1D4
Special	N/A



producing plague-proportion populations. In the wild, these populations are easily controlled by most predators. It is widely thought without such a breeding frenzy, the skait would have long ago become extinct due to its utter lack of defenses. Skaits make a high pitched hooting sound while communicating with others. If a mate is not found during the eclipse, the hooting can reach a fevered pitch and keep most people awake for days at a time.

### **The Glispeen Slug**

This slug is a master of camouflage, wrapping itself in plain sight around the base of the glispeen tree. The slug is large and flat, closely resembling its eastern swamp-dwelling cousin. Brownish-gray in color it can reach 1.3m by 1.3m and fully engulf a man from the chest downward. Although Winston is usually fairly heartless about losing his staff to minor encounters, in this case he happens to be right: the digestive acids secreted by this slug are strong enough to completely dissolve a challisk in 10 rounds. Like the l'aarg above, the best offense is a good defense. Players should keep their eyes wide open and avoid contact with this creature at all costs. The glispeen slug is most commonly found in the southern forests of the eastern Delshan Isle. They will not attack unless touched.

Number Appearing	1
Reaction	Dangerous
Skin Armor	None
Adv. Bonus	+2
Attack Type	Dissolve, special
Damage	Per blaster chart
Speed	1D4
Attack Rank	12
Defense Rank	3
To Hit at Range	8
Dyshas	N/A
Isho	1D4
Special	Entrap then dissolve w/ acid